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**GOVERNOR BARBOUR APPOINTS THOMPSON
TO HEAD DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TAYLOR RETIRES

(JACKSON, Mississippi) — Governor Haley Barbour today named Don Thompson of Brandon as Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (DHS), replacing Donald R. Taylor who announced his retirement. Thompson will officially begin serving in his new position July 1, 2008.

“Don Thompson has the strong credentials, knowledge and necessary experience to hit the ground running and I am pleased he has agreed to accept this vital and challenging position in state government,” Governor Barbour said. “He has a consistent record of achievement in senior healthcare administrative positions that will serve him well as Executive Director of DHS. I know he shares my personal concern for the well-being of our neediest citizens.”

Thompson, a Hazlehurst native, has served as State Personnel Director since 2007 and prior to that was Deputy Administrator at the Division of Medicaid. His distinguished career in the United States Navy spans from 1970 to 2004 where he held various major staff and senior healthcare positions. A graduate of Mississippi State University, Thompson holds both a master’s degree and a bachelor of science degree in Business Administration.

Thompson is married to the former Dorothy Myers of Lakeview, Ohio. They have one adult daughter, Kimberly, who is a Navy Lieutenant.

Governor Barbour also praised the outstanding leadership provided by retiring DHS Executive Director Taylor, who has served in the position since the beginning of the first Barbour Administration in 2004.

“Don Taylor’s personal and professional dedication to the vital missions of the Department of Human Services is legendary and his record of achievement reflects his tireless efforts,” Governor Barbour said. “DHS has repeatedly received federal awards for outstanding performance under his leadership.”

Taylor has served the longest tenure of any DHS commissioner in the country, totaling nine years at the helm between Governor Barbour and former Governor Kirk Fordice's Administrations.

He is credited with leading efforts to help Mississippi's children, resulting in a \$36 million increase in child support collections during his tenure. And one of the agency's greatest accomplishments was processing more than 186,000 disaster food stamp applications and issuing \$110 million in benefits in less than 30 days after Hurricane Katrina.

In addition, DHS earned the 2008 Director's Cup for Excellence in administering the Food Stamp Program. Under Taylor's leadership DHS received the highest combined points in the areas of payment accuracy, negative error rates, claims management, and program access. In FY 2006, Mississippi received two bonus checks for high performance in the area of best payment accuracy (\$1,986,833) and most improved program access (\$1,396,703); in FY 2007, Mississippi collected over \$4 million in over-issuance dollars, achieving the highest percentage of monies collected for established claims in the Southeast region.

DHS employs nearly three thousand people and oversees State and Federal programs for children, families, and seniors in all 82 counties. The mission of the agency is to provide services for people in need by optimizing all available resources to sustain the family unit and to encourage traditional family values thereby promoting self-sufficiency and personal responsibility for all Mississippians.